

**AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT:**

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

Abstract of the Disclosure

~~A method of~~An analysis for determining a characteristic cycle time of a sample.  
The ~~method comprises~~inactive exciting active elements in the sample with sufficient intensity that at least some of the active elements are re-excited to an excited state substantially immediately following relaxation to a ground state, detecting quanta emitted by the active elements in the sample to obtain a detected signal, and ~~analysing~~analyzing the detected signal to derive the characteristic cycle time. The number of active elements in the sample and the intensity of the excitation are such that quanta are detected in a stream in which individual quanta are distinguishable from each other.